Fundamental texts of the RAF III

bombings of us army headquarters in frankfurt and heidelberg declarations (1972)

Camille Akmut [trans.] 2023

Introduction

"*People ... have made the experience that demonstrations and words against the crimes of imperialism are useless.*"

This concluding sentence on the uselessness of demonstrations is an attack on one of the most fundamental values of liberal thinking. Demonstrations being of course the tactic favored of liberals, as opposed to armed fighting, the strategy advocated by the RAF

Demonstrations, one could say, are liberals' top past-time : in their minds almost identical to revolution - except one gets to go home and eat dinner and watch television afterward.

Demonstrations are the tool without which they could not think their place in the world anymore : After all, some relief must be allowed by any durably effective repressive system

This sentiment, i.e. distrust expressed about the value of demonstrations, is echoed elsewhere in passages where the RAF writes about "illusions" and efficiency of strikes (cf. *The Armed Fight in Western Europe*).

In general a major concern of the RAF was the critical discussion of 'legality' and 'illegality' notions as well as connected ideas of 'natural' and 'unnatural'; and the Bourgeois conception underlying them, false and hypocritical.

In both *City Guerrilla* and *City Guerrilla and Class War* these are central themes.[1]

This aspect of RAF philosophy can be seen as a continuation of Marx and Engels' developments about the Bourgeois State, in particular Bourgeois Law component. A system superficially neutral but working overtime in the interests of owners, exploiters (whose actions in turn are deemed legal).

Black September writings : the strength of this text is that it reaffirms the nature of the Summer 1972 Olympics as an anti-imperialist event. Moment in a historical chain of a wider conflict. Contra media portrayals favoring unintelligible talk of "senseless bloodshed", "incomprehensible horror", etc. - invariably repeated from event to event - no matter the circumstances by interchangeable journalists, while ignoring the daily violence inherent to and normalized under capitalism.

The inversion of values, that philosophers just as revolutionaries must operate, is an important part of the revolutionary process; Yet in the doctrine of the RAF words are not enough...

[1] In detail, *City Guerrilla*'s sixth section and *City Guerrilla and Class War*'s introduction.

Declaration on the occasion of the bombings of US Army headquarters in Frankfurt (1972)

On Thursday May 11th, 1972 - on the day when the US imperialists began their bomb blockade against North Vietnam - the commando unit Petra Schelm[2] detonated bombs with an explosive force of 80 kg TNT inside the Frankfurt headquarters of the American Army corps.

West-Germany and Berlin are no longer a quiet, peaceful hinterland [backyard] from which extermination [genocidal, mass murder][3] strategies for Vietnam can be devised.

You need to know that your crimes against the people of Vietnam have created new bitter enemies for you, and that there is no place in the world where you can be safe from guerrilla attacks by revolutionary groups.

We demand that the bomb blockade on North Vietnam be immediately stopped.
We demand the immediate end of bombings against North Vietnam.
We demand that all American troupes leave Indochina.
Victory to the Vietcong!

(...)

[2] trans. note in our understanding Petra was one of the first RAF members to be killed (1971); hence we understand the name of the commando group to be in honor of her, and not in the sense of being headed by her... It seems that naming guerrilla units after dead members was a more general practice of the RAF (repeated in other actions).

[3] ["Ausrottung"]

Declaration - bombings of US Army headquarters in Europe, Heidelberg (1972)

Inside headquarters of American forces in Europe, in Heidelberg, yesterday evening on Wednesday May 24th 1972, two bombs with an explosive force of 200 kg TNT exploded.

This attack happened after General Daniel James, division chief at the Pentagon[4], declared in Washington on Wednesday : "For US air force no location North or South of the 17th line will be an exception in the future." On Monday the Foreign Minister in Hanoi had again accused the United States of bombing densely populated areas in North Vietnam.

In the last 7 weeks, the American air force has dropped more bombs on Vietnam than during WWII on Germany and Japan altogether. Talk is of millions of explosive materials, which the Pentagon intends to use to stop the North-Vietnamese offensive. That is genocide, mass murder, it would be "the final solution", that's Auschwitz.

People in the Federal Republic won't help security forces in their search for the perpetrators of the bombings because they want nothing to do with US imperialism and its justification by the ruling class. Because they haven't forgotten Auschwitz, Dresden and Hamburg[5], they know that bombings against the mass murderers of Vietnam is justified. And because they have made the experience that demonstrations and words against the crimes of imperialism are useless.

(...)

[4]["Abteilungsleiter"]

[5]trans. note Dresden and Hamburg : major targets of US-UK bombings during World War II. High civilian casualties.

City Guerrilla (1972)

VI. Legality and Illegality

Legality is a question of who holds power [*Legalitat ist eine Machtfrage*]. The relationship between legality and illegality is determined by the contradiction of reformist and fascist exercise of power,

[trans. note the RAF then proceeds to list both sides, reformist and fascist hence, in contemporary politics, media etc.]

its current representatives in Bonn are the social/liberal coalition here, Barzel/Strauss there,
its representatives in the press are for example *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, *Stern*, the third program of the WDR and SFB, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* here, the Springer corporation (...) there

(...)

The reformist line is to avoid conflicts, be it through institutionalization processes (citizen participation[6]), reformist promises [etc.]

(...)

It depends on whether communists (...) can use legality, among others, for the purpose of organizing illegality, instead of fetishizing one against the other.
(...)

The Red Army Fraction organizes illegality into an offensive position for revolutionary intervention.

To engage in city guerrilla means to fight offensively in the anti-imperialist war. The Red Army Fraction creates the connection between legal and illegal fight, between national and international fight, between political and armed fight (...)

"Either you're a part of the problem or you're a part of the solution.[7] In between there's nothing. That shit has been known for decades and generations, has been investigated and inspected by all sides. I'm only of the opinion that, for the most part, what is going on in this country no longer has a need for further investigation" says Cleaver.

[6] ["Mitbestimmung"]

[7] trans. note another example of the (ideological) unity existing among RAF members : the same reference is found in Meins' text.